

CIA chief admits Iran forecast gaff

WASHINGTON (AP) — CIA Director Stansfield Turner conceded yesterday the agency failed to predict the severity of political upheavals in Iran, but added that the rest of world's intelligence agencies didn't do any better.

"Clearly, we would have liked to have done better," Turner said. "But I would like to point out that forecasting political upheavals and military coups and unexpected election results are probably the most difficult parts of intelligence, much more difficult than military or economic intelligence."

Turner said, however, that he knew of no other intelligence agencies in the world that predicted the Iranian upheaval. He also noted that no journalists or scholars predicted that the shah would be forced to leave the country.

"As we reconstruct our reporting over last summer and fall, clearly we saw lots of dissidents," Turner explained, "for religious reasons, for cultural, for political, for economic reasons."

"It was like a series of volcanoes bubbling. But it certainly appeared that no one of them would bubble up so much that the government couldn't control it."

"What we didn't forecast was that a single man, a 78-year-old cleric who had been in exile for 15 years, would be a catalyst that would bring these forces together, and we had one huge volcano, a truly national revolution."

"It means that we have to do better at looking at the socio-economic happenings in countries," Turner said. "It's not easy . . . but we'll try harder."

The CIA director also insisted that he was not distressed when President Carter openly criticized CIA intelligence on Iran as inadequate.

"One is pleased when one's boss tells you how you can serve him better," Turner said.

Turner was interviewed on the ABC television program "Issues and Answers."